

Nigeria

The most populous and one of the most politically significant countries in Africa is Nigeria. It is a place rich in diversity. This is evidenced by its many ethnic cultures, its art and music, and its history, as well as by its physical features. The country lies on the southern coast of western Africa. It is bordered on the north by Niger and on the northeast by Chad. Cameroon lies to the east and Benin to the west. The Gulf of Guinea, which is part of the Atlantic Ocean, lies directly south of Nigeria. The capital of Nigeria is Abuja, located near the center of the country. Area 356,669 square miles (923,768 square kilometers). Population (2013 est.) 174,508,000.

Nigeria faces many challenges in the 21st century. Although it is an oil-rich nation, fluctuation in world petroleum prices after the 1980s caused great economic instability in the country. The political climate was particularly unstable during the late 20th century, when elected governments were repeatedly ousted by military coups. Clashes between the country's many ethnic cultures have also created problems. As a way to manage its diversity, Nigeria has modeled itself after the United States in adopting a state system, with the hope that some degree of self-government at local levels will help to ease ethnic conflict.

Land and Climate

Nigeria extends some 900 miles (1,450 kilometers) from the semiarid savanna grasslands in the north to the humid tropical rainforests of the southern and coastal regions.

Land

Nigeria is a physically diverse country divided by the Niger-Benue river system into three sections, or belts. The north is made up of gently rolling plains interrupted by plateaus that reach heights of roughly 1,500 feet (460 meters) above sea level. Central Nigeria has a more varied relief and is marked by the rugged highlands of the Jos Plateau, where numerous extinct volcanoes can be found. Only along the eastern border can true mountains be found, however, including the highest point in the country, Chappal Waddi, which rises to 7,936 feet (2,419 meters). The southern and coastal regions of Nigeria consist primarily of low-lying plains and the southwestern uplands. In the southeast, the huge delta of the Niger River is marked by mangroves and dense forests.

Although Nigeria contains small rivers in the north such as the Kaduna, the Gongola, and the Sokoto, its major river feature is the Niger and its main tributary, the Benue. The Niger enters the country in the west along the border of the countries of Niger and Benin, and, after turning south, eventually enters the Gulf of Guinea near the Atlantic Ocean. Lake Chad in the northeast is one of the few large, permanent, standing bodies of water, its size fluctuating markedly in relation to rainfall patterns.

Much of the soil found in Nigeria is the red soil characteristic of tropical regions. Although these soils are not of a very high quality, they are productive when slash-and-burn and intercropping farming techniques are used. Sandy soils predominate in the north.

Climate

Nigeria's climate is shaped by moist, unstable air to the south and the dry, stable air of the Sahara to the north. The northward movement of moist air from the Atlantic Ocean brings precipitation to Nigeria. In the south, humidity and temperatures are high year-round. Annual rainfall ranges from about 60 to 100 inches (150 to 250 centimeters), distributed over at least eight months.

In the middle belt there is greater contrast between seasons. Annual rainfall varies from about 35 to 55 inches (90 to 140 centimeters), and temperatures range from a dry-season average of 86° F (30° C) to 77° F (25° C) in the wet season. The latter period extends from May to November.

Rainfall in the extreme north tends to be unpredictable, and droughts are common. Roughly 20 to 35 inches (50 to 90 centimeters) of rain fall between June and October. The dry season is very hot between February and May, and daily temperatures in April regularly exceed 95° F (35° C). The harmattan, a hot, dry northeast trade wind, blows for more than three months in the north.

Plants and Animals

The geographic patterns of tropical vegetation and animal life in Nigeria correspond closely to the zones of rainfall distribution. In the south, year-round rainfall, high humidity, solar radiation, and generally equatorial conditions produce tropical rainforests. In central Nigeria, less rainfall and greater seasonal contrasts produce a combination of woodlands and open grasslands. The combination of hot, dry conditions coupled with a short rainy season produce savanna grasslands in northern Nigeria.

Rapid population growth, inappropriate land-use practices, climatic change, and poor development policy have contributed to environmental degradation. In some parts of the north, soil quality has declined and desert conditions have spread. In the south deforestation has been extensive. Such environmental change has dramatically affected animal populations and local habitats. In the delta region, where most of Nigeria's petroleum can be found, damage to the environment has been especially severe.

Plants

The dense forests of Nigeria include some of the oldest, most complex, and diverse habitats in the world. Human activities—particularly burning, agriculture, and logging—have greatly reduced the area of natural rainforest, leaving a landscape that resembles well-wooded grassland. The low rainfall and strong seasonality in central Nigeria create a luxuriant mix of trees and grasses that vary in size and dominance from north to south. More trees and taller grasses are found in the southern part of the belt, while relatively fewer trees and shorter grasses are distributed at the northern end. The result is a distinctive environment called Guinea savanna. This region is less densely populated than other parts of the country. In the north, the dry climate produces a characteristic grassland ecology called Sudan savanna. Heavily cultivated with such useful tree species as mango and baobab, the northern savanna resembles a farmed parkland. Grasses, stunted shrubs, acacias, and other drought-resistant plants can survive the region's meager rainfall.

Animals

Most countries in Africa have national parks and Nigeria is no exception. It is here at places such as Yankari National Park and Cross River Park where lions, giraffes, and leopards can be found. These animals, along

with camels, hyenas, elephants, and gorillas, were once found throughout the savanna region. Antelopes, monkeys, and pigs are still found in the southern part of the country where they are frequently hunted for food. In addition to numerous varieties of birds and rodents found throughout the country, crocodiles and fish are found in the southern rivers. There are many kinds of insects here, including the anopheles mosquito, which carries malaria, and the tsetse fly, which causes sleeping sickness. Snakes, both poisonous and nonpoisonous, are also abundant.

People and Culture

Nigeria is a country of great cultural diversity and political complexity. Many languages are spoken there, and the country contains a large number of ethnic groups with a rich history. Traditions of metalworking, technical innovation, and elaborate city development existed among Yoruba-speaking peoples in the southwest prior to the 15th century. In the north the Muslim Hausa-speaking societies were renowned for their international trade, high-quality textile and craft production, and ancient centers of Islamic learning. Some ethnic groups such as the Yoruba, the Hausa, and the Edo created precolonial states. Other groups, such as the Igbo, lived in decentralized societies. Art produced by the Yoruba and the Edo is world-renowned.

Traditional houses were often built out of mud. Such houses could be quite elaborate and may have contained several rooms. In Benin City the palace of the oba (king) was at one time decorated with metal doors that portrayed rituals. The largest cities now contain modern multistoried buildings, though traditional houses with zinc roofs can be found in both rural and urban areas.

Population Dynamics

The Nigerian population has been increasing at a steady rate since its first census was taken in 1963. By the early 21st century, the country's birth and death rates were higher than world averages, and life expectancy was less than 50 years for both men and women.

Nigeria's population is primarily rural, though its urban areas have grown steadily since independence. The most densely settled rural areas are in parts of the southwest and north. Southern Nigeria is the country's most economically developed region and contains the important cultural centers of the Yoruba, the Edo, and the Igbo. Central Nigeria is the least inhabited part of the country but has been gaining importance since the new capital of Abuja was built there. In precolonial times, the north maintained important trade routes connecting it with North Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East.

Language

More than 500 languages are spoken in Nigeria. The major languages are Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, and Fulani. Linguistically, the country is divided almost in half between those speaking northern languages such as Hausa-Fulani, Kanuri, and Tiv and those speaking southern languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, Edo, and Ibibio. Many of these languages are used in primary school education and are used in mass communications, such as television and radio broadcasts. Most Nigerians speak more than one language. English is the official language of the government.

With few exceptions, African languages were not written down until the 19th century. After Islam spread into northern Nigeria, some documents were written in Arabic. Literature in Yoruba has been written in that language since the late 19th century. Other languages such as Igbo and Edo were written down as a means of translating parts of the Bible into African languages.

Religion

Nigeria contains Muslims, Christians, and practitioners of traditional religions. Islam arrived in Nigeria during the 14th century and tends to dominate in the north. However, many Yoruba, who live in the southwest, also are Muslims. Christianity is practiced in many parts of the country, especially in the southern and middle belts. Christianity that is combined with traditional, or indigenous, religious practices is the fastest-growing form of Christianity.

Culture

Despite the antiquity of some of its cities and cultural traditions, Nigeria is a modern country that enjoys many Western cultural customs. Vibrant nightclubs, movie theaters, and restaurants can be found in all of the major southern cities. Such places also exist in parts of the north, though Muslim codes of behavior prevalent in these regions often restrict indulgence in Western entertainment and fashion. The introduction of strict Muslim laws in some northern states in 1999 has led to the segregation of men and women in public places. Regardless of region or religion, the family is the fundamental unit for most people in Nigeria, even if the family is spread across states, regions, and continents.

Art

Africa is world renowned for its art, and some of its most important art can be found in Nigeria. Contemporary artists have embraced this legacy, building on older traditions as well as adapting Western artistic styles and media. During the 20th century, Yoruba women artists were especially prominent in adapting traditional forms of cloth dyeing (called *adire*) to express social concerns. The most well-known artist communities in Nigeria are centered in the cities of Oshogbo and Ife.

Nigerian art is as rich in diversity as is the country itself. The earliest pieces of art found in Nigeria are from the Nok culture. Hundreds of ceramic heads, some dated as early as 800 bc and as late as ad 600, have been uncovered. Despite these finds, scholars know very little about the Nok people and their culture. The Yoruba city of Ife produced realistic zinc, brass, and terra-cotta statues of precolonial kings and queens that date to a period from the 12th through the 15th century. The Igbo were known for their masks and shrine figures.

By far the most numerous and well-known pieces of Nigerian art were created in the kingdom of Benin. This art only became known in the West after the British captured the state and its capital, Benin City, in 1897. Beautiful bracelets carved out of ivory found their way to the art market as did numerous statues of the king and his attendants. The statues were created by the lost wax method. In this method, a model of the subject is made in wax that is then covered with clay. Molten bronze is then poured over the clay, melting the wax and leaving the statue, now cast in bronze.

Literature and music

Literature, whether oral or written, has a long and very rich tradition in Nigeria. Oral stories of many kinds are told by all Nigerian cultures. Traditionally, many elders would teach by using proverbs to carry a message to younger people. In some precolonial states professional historians would recite the history and exploits of the king and those associated with him. Many of these oral tales and histories have now been written down in Nigerian languages, and many are even available in English. As more Nigerians received Western-style education, some authors used English to attempt to capture the practices of traditional Nigerian society for non-Nigerian readers. Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka won the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature for his rich body of work, which includes plays, poetry, fiction, and essays.

Music and dance are integral to Nigerian culture, and each ethnic group has its own specialties. While African music does utilize melody instruments, it is most famous for its rhythms. Traditionally, music was a part of all important rituals and ceremonies. Modern music that combines Western instruments with African rhythms has become world-renowned. King Sunny Ade and Fela are just two examples of Nigerian musicians who have gained fans around the world.

Sports

Wrestling was an important precolonial sport in many parts of Africa, including Nigeria. Today, Nigerian athletes perform at the world class level in many sports. At the 1996 Olympics, gold medals were awarded to the men's soccer (association football) team and the women's team in track and field. Nigerians are also found on college and professional football and basketball teams in the United States.

Education and Social Welfare

In the precolonial period education was received from village elders. Western education came to Nigeria through Christian missionaries, who began arriving in the country at the end of the 19th century. After independence from colonial rule was achieved in 1960, most primary and secondary education was private. There were only two institutions of higher learning at that time: University College (now the University of Ibadan), an extension of the University of London, and Yaba College of Technology. The Nigerian government then began to expand the number of public educational institutions. Beginning in the 1970s, Nigeria financed a program that made primary education universally available to the entire population. This dramatically increased literacy in the country. There was a similar push to expand the number of universities, as well as polytechnics and a host of other institutions of higher learning.

In general, the health of Nigerians has improved since the early colonial period, when exposure to European pathogens carried by colonial rulers, among other problems, caused great hardship and illness within the Nigerian population. Health care in Nigeria, as in many developing countries, is seriously underfunded; thus, the population continues to suffer from diseases that are preventable or curable, such as respiratory illnesses. Among the worst problems are malaria, sleeping sickness, tuberculosis, and AIDS. The number of AIDS cases in Nigeria has steadily increased since the 1990s—in 2001 approximately 6 percent of Nigerians were living with AIDS or infected with HIV, the virus that causes it. Although alarming, this rate is relatively low in comparison with some other sub-Saharan countries such as Botswana, where the prevalence of HIV infection exceeds 30 percent.

Western-style medical facilities are found in most larger cities in Nigeria. The number of medical schools in the country began to increase after independence in 1960, though by the early 21st century there were still not enough facilities to adequately serve the entire population. All ethnic groups used some form of traditional

medicine in their precolonial societies, and today these traditional doctors form an important part of medical treatment in Nigeria.

Major Cities

Nigeria's former capital, Lagos, is one of the largest cities in the world, with a population of more than 9 million people. It is located on Lagos Island and contains modern high-rises and skyscrapers as well as open market stalls. Because of the crowded conditions in Lagos, the capital of Abuja was created in 1976, though government offices were not moved there until 1991. Centered in the middle of the country where few people lived, the new capital city was developed with wide avenues and ordered streets.

Most of Nigeria's other large cities are found in the southwest. This region is the ancestral home of the Yoruba, who lived in cities long before the colonial period. Ibadan, a city of more than 2 million people, is the home of Nigeria's first university, the University of Ibadan. Ogbomosho and Oshogbo are located just northeast of Ibadan. Oshogbo houses a number of manufacturing industries, including the processing of cocoa, tobacco, and palm products. Benin City sits to the south of Ogbomosho and Oshogbo. Until the 19th century, it was the center of the Edo kingdom. Its artists were much noted for their carvings, and the city was an important center for trade. Today, it houses the University of Benin and continues to serve as an export center. The only large city in the northern part of the country is Kano, which was founded in the 11th century. It serves as an important trading center for agricultural commodities, and also houses numerous industries that produce a range of items, such as metalware and leather goods.

Economy

Nigeria is a resource-rich country, though its economy has been greatly mismanaged. It is a leading producer of columbite, a mineral containing iron, magnesium, and niobium. Despite these resources, however, the mainstay of the economy since the 1970s has been petroleum.

Mining and Energy Production

Nigeria is one of the largest producers of petroleum in Africa and a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). There are large quantities of oil and natural gas in the region around the mouth of the Niger River; thus, most of Nigeria's oil fields are in the southeast and offshore in the delta region. Petroleum production and exploration are largely controlled by the government in conjunction with multinational oil companies.

The great surge in world oil prices beginning in 1973 enabled the Nigerian government to undertake a massive program of construction, industrialization, and extended social services. Falling oil prices in 1982 led to widespread unemployment, reduced imports, and political instability. One of the projects undertaken soon after the oil boom began was the construction of the new capital city of Abuja. Flaws in this program, coupled with falling oil prices, created major economic problems that incurred a foreign debt of \$31.5 billion in 1992. The era of petroleum-based development in Nigeria is now recognized as a period of waste, inefficient use of wealth, and as having deteriorated the standard of living.

In addition to columbite, Nigeria also mines coal and tin. The country also has sizable deposits of iron, lead,

and zinc, along with smaller amounts of uranium and gold.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing is an increasingly important sector of the Nigerian economy, though most of the country's manufacturing companies are relatively small. Mills for the production of steel, as well as pulp and paper products, have been established in a number of cities. Other important manufactured products include cloth and textiles, processed foods, cement, beer, and footwear.

Traditional manufacturing is also widespread in Nigeria. Products such as pottery, wood carvings, and mats and bags woven from raffia are manufactured in home-based workshops. Other home-based industries include those that produce iron implements, such as hoes and door hinges.

Agriculture, Fishing, and Forestry

About 85 percent of Nigeria's land is suitable for farming and grazing, while roughly 11 percent is forested and provides mahogany, iroko, ebony, and other woods. There are several plywood factories and sawmills. The variety of crops includes millet, sorghum, sugarcane, corn (maize), cassava, oil palm fruit, and rice. Goats are the leading livestock, followed by sheep and cattle. For all of its potential, however, Nigeria's agriculture suffered a major decline when oil prices rose in the 1970s.

Although it employs more than half of the national workforce, agriculture accounts for only a small fraction of the country's exports. The export of traditional crops collapsed as the result of poor government policy and low prices on the world market in the 1970s. The government has attempted to stimulate agricultural production through a number of measures, including large-scale irrigation schemes and an expansion of credit to farmers. However, food production has failed to keep up with the country's rapid population growth.

Transportation and Communication

By African standards Nigeria has an excellent system of communications and a large popular press. The growth in oil revenues facilitated an expansion of the Nigerian road system, which now connects the entire country. The national airline provides extensive service to all regions, and the country has adequate telephone service. Internet and mobile cellular telephone services are available, particularly in the larger cities. There are several major federal radio services to the regions, a national television network, more than a dozen national daily newspapers, and many national weeklies published in English or African languages.

Government

Nigeria is a federal republic with two legislative bodies, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate has 109 elected members—three from each state and one from the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. The House of Representatives has 360 elected members. The president can be elected for two consecutive terms, and the political party he represents must have broad support across ethnic and state lines.

Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has largely been ruled by military personnel who have overthrown democratically elected governments. A new constitution was approved in 1999.

Since the mid-1960s Nigeria has been divided into states. In 1991 the number of states was increased to 36 plus a federal territory that includes the capital of Abuja. Each state has a locally elected governor and state government. In many parts of Nigeria traditional rulers continue to exist, but their function is ceremonial since they have no formal position in the government.

Nigeria incorporates three kinds of law into its judicial system: law codes derived from years of British rule over Nigeria; customary law, which follows practices established in precolonial states; and sharia, which are laws that follow Islamic teachings. The country has a Supreme Court as well as lower courts and federal and state courts. According to the 1999 constitution, the Court of Appeal contains judges who are experts in customary and Islamic law as well as British legal traditions. After democratic elections in 1999, 12 states chose to adopt sharia to govern their citizens. Non-Muslim residents of those states were assured that they would not be subject to the Islamic codes of justice.

History

The area that is now Nigeria has been inhabited for thousands of years. The earliest known civilization, called Nok, existed near the Jos Plateau possibly as early as 800 bc. Archaeologists have found ceramic artifacts from this period but do not know much about the culture.

Precolonial States

Nigeria did not exist as a country until the British united regions in the north and south to form the Nigeria Protectorate in 1914. Prior to that time the region was populated by various independent states. In the south the first Yoruba state was founded at the city of Ife. This city was occupied as early as the 6th century; by the 11th century it had become the capital of a well-established kingdom. After the political center of the Yoruba had moved to Oyo, Ife became their religious center. To the south of Ife was the kingdom of Benin, which was founded by the Edo people sometime about the 10th century. The Edo had connections with Ife but were powerful in their own right.

The Hausa people occupied much of the northern plains region, which gave them access to the important trans-Saharan trade routes. This location supported the development of many states, including Kano, Katsina, Zaria, and Gobir. Each of these states included a walled city and market center and was governed by a king. The Kanem-Bornu empire, centered near Lake Chad, was also an important stop on the trade routes. This empire was ruled by the Sef dynasty from the 9th to the 19th century.

Not all people in the area created independent states. The Igbo lived in decentralized villages that were led by a council of elders composed of the oldest and most successful men in the village. Igbo women were also permitted to participate in council meetings.

Slavery and Colonization

While northern Nigeria remained on the edges of European expansion until the 19th century, the south became directly connected to the world economy in the early 16th century, when Nigeria became a part of the Atlantic slave trade. Over the next two centuries millions of Nigerians were forcibly removed to the New World. The involvement of Nigeria in slave trading varied by region, however. The Yoruba states were

deeply involved in slave trade; wars among various Yoruba states produced a ready supply of slaves, particularly in the 19th century. Some of the Muslim Hausa states were also involved in the slave trade. Although Benin used slaves internally, it stopped trading slaves with Europeans in the 18th century.

The first Europeans to reach the Nigerian coast were the Portuguese, who arrived in 1472. By the 17th century other Europeans had joined them. British slave ships visited the Nigerian coast until 1807, when Great Britain outlawed the slave trade. After that the British patrolled the western coast of Africa in an attempt to keep other countries from trading in slaves.

The growing pressure from the European presence in what would become Nigeria increased during the 19th century. A British presence was felt in southern Nigeria first and began in the 1850s to be centered around Lagos. By mid-century European companies had replaced a trade in slaves with one that focused on Africans receiving European manufactured goods in exchange for agricultural commodities that they produced, such as the palm oil that was used in the manufacture of soap and for oiling machinery. By the end of the century, almost all of Nigeria's independent states had lost their independence to the British.

Colonialism

In 1914 Lord Frederick Lugard, the governor of Britain's territories in Nigeria, united the states in northern and southern Nigeria into a single colony, thus forming the country of Nigeria. The British presence was relatively stronger in the southern portions of the territory. In the north, where the population was largely Muslim and thus not amenable to British cultural influences and Christianity, the British allowed traditional leaders to govern. The British also used traditional leaders to rule the people in the south. In this region, however, some of these leaders were actually chosen by the British rather than the people.

Christianity had an enormous influence on the south, establishing schools and medical clinics. The missionaries exerted a strong and negative effect against many African cultural practices, which they considered to be wrong or improper. Thus, many traditions and beliefs were abandoned by Nigerians as they fell under Christian influence.

The British presence in Nigeria created tremendous unrest among many of its people. Dissent was frequent and continued into the first two decades of the 20th century. Even when the more strident protests died down, Africans still opposed British rule. One example of this was the Igbo Women's War of 1929, when women protested the imposition of a hut tax on women.

While some Africans expressed nationalistic sentiments in the early part of the 20th century, the desire for independence from Britain grew after World War II. Independence was finally granted on October 1, 1960. A new constitution was adopted and a government was selected under the guidance of a UN referendum. On October 1, 1963, Nigeria formally became a republic.

Independence

The newly independent country of Nigeria faced many problems. First and foremost were ethnic tensions created by the large number of different ethnic groups within one country. Prior to independence Nigeria had been divided into three regions in an attempt to address the differences between regions while maintaining equal treatment for all Nigerians. This use of divisions continued throughout the first 40 years of the

country's postindependence history, though it did not totally solve the problem of regional tensions. A major problem was the wide disparity in development between the north and the south. Because the British had left the north to largely rule itself during the colonial period, it was not well prepared to face independence. Western education, which would eventually produce government leaders, had not penetrated very deeply into the region. Because of this, the new Nigerian government sent officials from other ethnic groups—largely Christian and often Igbo—into the north to govern the area. This created further tension, culminating in the political assassination of two regional premiers, a military takeover in 1966, and civil war the following year. Eastern Nigeria, dominated by the Igbo, seceded from the federation as the republic of Biafra in 1967; it was reintegrated only after three years of bloodshed and many deaths.

Following the 1967 civil war, Nigeria was ruled largely by military governments. Power was seized by Gen. Yakubu Gowon, who ruled Nigeria until 1975, when he was deposed by a military coup. After a short series of power struggles among other leaders, the reins of the country were passed in 1976 to Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo. Three years later, Obasanjo led Nigeria to a civilian government based on a constitution adopted in 1978. This document formally established Nigeria once again as a federal republic, with a system of government modeled after the United States. Nigeria's state system was developed in an attempt to give rights to local peoples while keeping a strong central government.

The first civilian elections in decades were held in 1979, and Nigerians elected Shehu Shagari, a leader of the right-wing National Party of Nigeria. During his tenure as president, the government was marred by enormous political corruption, waste, and abuse. Shagari was reelected to a second term in 1983 but was ousted later that year in a military coup led by Muhammad Buhari, who was himself replaced two years later in a bloodless coup by Ibrahim Babangida, another member of the military.

Although Babangida presented himself as a considerate leader, the public demand for a return to civilian rule could not be ignored. Free elections were held in 1993, and a civilian, Moshood Abiola, was declared the winner. However, the election results were voided immediately by Babangida's government. This move sparked widespread civil unrest, forcing Babangida to resign as president. Power was handed over to a nonelected interim civilian government, but within months the military, led by Gen. Sani Abacha, had seized control of the nation. Abacha abandoned the economic reforms of his predecessors and had Abiola arrested and jailed on charges of treason in June 1994. He also imprisoned Obasanjo, the former military leader.

After five years of extreme dictatorial rule, Abacha died of a heart attack in June 1998. His successor, Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar, promised to hold elections for a new government, and in 1999 Obasanjo was elected president. Ethnic and sectarian violence erupted in the early 21st century, as did militant attacks against oil companies active in the Niger delta. In 2007 Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was declared the winner of a presidential election marred by voting irregularities and fraud. Recurring health problems, however, led Yar'Adua on several occasions to seek medical treatment abroad, and his prolonged absence from the country in late 2009 prompted many lawmakers to call for his resignation. On February 9, 2010, the Senate and the House of Representatives voted to have the country's vice president, Goodluck Jonathan, serve as acting president until Yar'Adua was able to resume his duties, and Jonathan assumed power the same day.

Additional Reading

Cite

While every effort has been made to follow citation style rules, there may be some discrepancies. Please refer

to the appropriate style manual or other sources if you have any questions.

"Nigeria." *Britannica School*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2014. Web. 23 May 2014.
<<http://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/276094>>.